

J  
 751  
 572

# Land policy

# REVIEW

## *Contents* FOR DECEMBER 1940 Vol. III No. 8

	Page
Grass Roots and Far Horizons . . . <i>Paul H. Johnstone</i>	3
For the Lowest Third . . . . . <i>Louis H. Bean</i>	13
Land Clearing in the Northwest	
<i>Willard W. Troxell and Harry J. Voth</i>	19
War, Food, Farming, and Prices . . . . . <i>O. C. Stine</i>	25
Western Wild Lands . . . . . <i>Mont H. Saunderson</i>	31
Land Holdings in South Carolina . . . . . <i>G. H. Aull</i>	34
Here Still — . . . . . <i>Esther Marie Colvin</i>	39
Solving a Problem Before it Starts . . . . . <i>B. M. Gile</i>	40
Books . . . . . <i>William T. Ham</i>	43
For Your Attention . . . . .	45
In Magazines . . . . .	47
Contributors and Notes . . . . .	Inside Front Cover

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

# Editorial Notes

## AND EXPRESSIONS

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE: PAUL H. JOHNSTONE, social psychologist and historian in the division of farm population and rural welfare, has a doctor's degree from the University of Minnesota. He wrote *Somewhere Else* for LAND POLICY REVIEW a year ago. DR. WILLIAM T. HAM, a member of the same division of BAE, specializes in problems of farm labor.

LOUIS H. BEAN, head agricultural economist in BAE, is the author, among other works, of *Ballot Behavior*, reviewed in this number. The book, based on studies that Mr. Bean has conducted as a hobby, has attracted wide attention.

ESTHER MARIE COLVIN, an editor in BAE, won the third award of the Martha MacLear Poetry Group of the Washington Branch, American Association of University Women.

G. H. AULL heads the department of agricultural economics and rural sociology of Clemson Agricultural College, South Carolina.

B. M. GILE is professor of agricultural economics in Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical college and the Agricultural Experiment Station.

WILLARD W. TROXELL, who contributed an article last January in LAND POLICY REVIEW's series on migrants, is an industrial economist whose work concerns land institutions and values and land use adjustment measures. HARRY J. VOTH is senior statistical clerk, division of land economics, BAE, Portland, Oreg.

DR. O. C. STINE is in charge of the BAE division of statistical and historical research.

MONT H. SAUNDERSON works in the field of forest economics at the Intermountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, Ogden, Utah.

IN LATER ISSUES: A. C. HOFFMAN, principal agricultural economist in the BAE division of marketing and transportation research, discusses the interesting subject of food technology and land use. V. KATKOFF, a graduate in agricultural economics of the University of California and author of several works about Russian agriculture, has written a timely article on Soviet agricultural insurance:

JAN 9 '41

## LAND • POLICY • REVIEW

Land Policy Review is published monthly by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, with approval of the Bureau of the Budget. For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 5 cents single copy, 50 cents per year

# Grass Roots AND FAR HORIZONS

By PAUL H. JOHNSTONE. *Grandfather's farm was self-sufficient, independent, secure. Its people were serene and happy. Life there was simple and satisfying. Its 160 acres grew fruits, grains, nuts, wood, vegetables, even peanuts and tobacco. Why can't we return to it, and to that idyllic life?*



MY GRANDFATHER was a farmer in southern Iowa. I still remember the farm and the household from the long visits made there when I was a small boy and Grandfather and Grandmother were quite old. Even 30 years ago farm life was much different from what it had been a generation or so earlier; but my grandparents were old-fashioned folk who lived as much as they could within the pattern of the customs and ideals that had prevailed when they were young, and so I got at least a fleeting glimpse of a world that was passing then and now is almost entirely gone.

Their farm had 160 acres of rich, rolling land. Thirty or forty acres were heavily timbered. The rest was in pasture or under cultivation. There were at least a few specimens of every common farm animal and fowl: Horses, cattle, hogs, sheep, and even goats—I remember one goat so

much petted that he had even learned to chew tobacco—and chickens, turkeys, and geese, with guinea hens to scare the hawks away.

Near a big orchard, with several varieties of apple, cherry, and plum trees, was a patch of currant and gooseberry bushes, with strawberries and raspberries and grapes just beyond. A big garden, carefully tended, produced almost every vegetable you can name offhand, and even peanuts and tobacco.

Not far from the kitchen door, Grandmother kept a small herb garden where mysterious plants flourished that, wisely administered, could cure everything from chilblains to rheumatic fever.

The fields were broken up, although I don't believe Grandfather ever used the word "diversification." The pasture was large, with a good-sized meadow of wild hay, but the land under the plow was cut up

into a dozen or more plats. The cornfield, the biggest, never exceeded 15 or 20 acres. A few acres were planted to potatoes, oats, wheat, barley, clover, beans, peas, one or another root crop, perhaps some flax or buckwheat, and melons and squashes. Pumpkins were always planted with the corn. Wild cucumbers climbed the fence along the road.

The barnyard included a little smithy where Grandfather shod his own horses. A combination root and cyclone cellar back of the house had a smell of stored potatoes and carrots, turnips and rutabagas, and moist earth, that I can remember even now.

The smokehouse I can still see—though it has long since been torn down—hung thick with hams and shoulders, and sides of pork. Nearby, and turned over to keep the rain out, was the big iron kettle used to make soap. In the granary was a bin for black walnuts gathered every fall as regularly as the corn was picked. And a row of beehives under the trees in the orchard supplied sweets for the family.

Grandfather and his family had few needs that the farm did not supply. They bought flour and salt and coffee and a few other minor items for the kitchen.

### *Simple Machines, Simple Amusements*

But when they wanted meat they killed a chicken, got ham from the smokehouse, or dug for sausages sealed in lard in big jars in the basement. Vegetables came from the garden, or, out of season, from the root cellar or from bins of sand.

And there were barrels of apples and long shelves lined with home preserves.

Fuel came from the big wood pile, at the cost of cutting and hauling in from the grove south of the barnyard. Grandfather used to make his singletrees and double-trees from the hickory that grew there. Once when he needed some lumber for a small building job he had logs from the woodlot sawed into boards on shares.

Kerosene for the lamps had to be bought, of course, and paint now and then for the buildings. Occasionally some implement broke, or wore out so completely that there was nothing to do but buy a new one. But that didn't happen often. Most of the machinery was simple, well greased, sheltered when not in use, and easily repaired in the little smithy when minor breakdowns occurred. A two-bottom gang plow and a binder were the heaviest and most expensive machines on the place.

Amusements and social life were inexpensive, centered around the little church and the one-room school that stood facing each other across the road a couple of miles away. On Sunday mornings, when the chores were done, everyone drove off to church. After the service, if the weather was good, most people stood around and talked for a long time. After that, either you had people in for Sunday dinner, or you went to their place. In the drowsy afternoon the youngsters played, the grown-ups conversed, and the old folk dozed until it was time to go home for the milking. Parties and picnics, literary society meetings, and church suppers ran through the year, with quantities of popcorn and

apples or cider and doughnuts or fried chicken and home-made ice cream, according to the season and the occasion.

There was plenty of fun. But seldom was there any that cost money, although the women frequently had lots of cooking to do.

### *The Successor Fails*

Grandfather's farm was operated as a place on which a humble family could make a modest but secure living. It was a good farm. I suspect that in the spring of 1920 it might easily have sold for \$400 an acre, perhaps more. Yet the man who owned it in 1920—a very hard-working and capable farmer, by the way—lost possession of it not many years later and became a tenant, whereas my grandfather, who I believe never once saw as much as \$400 all at one time, lived on that farm in untroubled peace and security until he died.

Let me emphasize right here that, as far as I can judge, the man who lived a contented lifetime of unthreatened security on that farm was no better a man, and no better a farmer, than the one who later lost it. The times had changed, not the quality of the men.

I suppose Grandfather was really very far from being a highly efficient farmer. He never bought good seed except for a very few things, like clover. Mostly, he saved out his own seed each year. His sires were far from being prize winners. He would never plant potatoes in the light of the moon, and he had many other superstitions. He hated the idea of banks and credit. Of all his tasks, he liked buying and selling and business transactions the

least. He did not keep books. He would have thought you had funny, outlandish ideas if you had asked him what his farm plan was.

### *The Only Plan—Unwritten*

Yet he had a plan, although it was never clearly expressed, let alone being written down. It was to produce everything possible on the farm to supply directly the family's needs, to reduce all need for things the farm could not produce, and to grow enough extra to be sold, to pay for the few things that had to be bought.

It was a casual matter to butcher a veal, kill a turkey, or pour a gallon of thick cream into the freezer on a Sunday afternoon. But purchasing as much as 10 cents' worth of stuff at the store and making out a small list for the mail order house were matters to be carefully weighed. Grandfather never had much cash. He never needed much.

To my knowledge, there was never a time, after Grandfather was fully settled on that farm shortly after the Civil War until he died in 1914, when anyone there ever felt so much as the slightest qualm of insecurity. There was always abundant food, adequate shelter, plenty of fuel, and sufficient clothing. Life on that farm was humble, but it afforded a rich chance for happiness. It was, above all things, secure.

It was secure because it was independent—almost completely independent of everybody else and everything else. No matter what anyone else did, no matter what happened anywhere else, life was serene and undisturbed. Life at the grass roots was untouched by events beyond

the horizon. That is why Grandfather and his family were so secure. If ever there had been any real lack of the necessities, it would have been easy to see the cause, for everything that had anything at all to do with supplying the material wants of that family took place under everyone's eyes.

Prosperity depended only on what the family did to help itself. To get a break with the weather helped, of course, but it was a fairly humid country, and a good carry-over of grain and hay was, ordinarily at least, sufficient insurance against most natural hazards.

So the folk on that farm didn't have to worry much about what other people did or what happened somewhere else. There were indeed times when no luxuries were bought; pants were frequently patched when new ones might have looked better; but the worst that could happen in time of depression was that a few nonessentials would be dispensed with.

### *A Haven From the World*

Grandfather's farm was, in fact, a haven from the great world outside. In a sense it amounted to a Social Security Board, a Farm Security Administration, an unemployment and disability insurance program, and a WPA. The social functions that in this later age have been performed by public agencies of relief and rehabilitation were accomplished with greater readiness and ease and efficiency than the new and formal institutions for these purposes have yet been able to achieve. For that farm was an institution of economic resilience and social safety that was the culmination of many centuries

of evolution toward an ideal of serene and decent security.

Life on that farm when I was a small boy was a good life, sweet to remember, and it was so far removed from the social ills and problems we face today that it sometimes seems hard to believe that such completely different states of things could exist so close together in time.

Nothing perhaps would seem more simple, or more direct, or more complete an answer to the ills that now assail us than to return to that kind of life.

And because so many of us are sensitive to the beauty and the harmony of the kind of life my Grandfather lived, no counsel is more sentimentally appealing than the advice to pick it up again where Grandfather left off.

But is that possible?

Can it be done, here and now, in the world that surrounds us? Can rural people today find security by cutting themselves off from the world, turning their backs upon society, and living completely unto themselves?

### *Why Can't We Go Back?*

We cannot go back to that kind of farm life and security unless we break almost every tie we have with all the world that lives beyond the bend in the road or over the farthest hill.

We cannot do it unless we shatter all our habits and ways of living that are connected in any way with the world beyond the bounds of our own community. And such a course would be vastly more drastic and revolutionary than any upon which a large number of men has ever willingly embarked.

We cannot go back to that kind of farm life and security unless we first give up automobiles and trucks and tractors and telephones and radios and electricity and every other mechanical advantage that modern science and technology have created for us.

For all such things are the products of specialization and of mass-production industry that can exist only if there is beside it a specialized and commercial agriculture to feed and clothe it and supply certain raw materials. And both commercialization and specialization inevitably mean dependence upon others, upon the market, upon a million deeds and events which cannot possibly be influenced and controlled by the same methods and procedures that Grandfather used to influence and control the course of events upon his farm.

We cannot have that kind of subsistence security on the farm so long as only one in four of our total population lives on the farm, or so long as we have 131,000,000 people, for there isn't enough land suitable for widely diversified production to enable so many to make their living that way.

### *We Cannot Remain Separate*

Many and vast areas that have an important and legitimate agricultural place in an interdependent and specialized economy cannot possibly support the subsistence kind of agriculture upon which Grandfather based his independence. If they were forced to choose between self-sufficient agriculture and no agriculture at all, they would have to choose none at all for ecological reasons alone.

Yet in a system of economic specialization, in which areas and groups concentrate on the production of those particular goods that they are well endowed by nature and custom to produce efficiently, they have a definite and important place in the total economy.

Even if it seemed possible for large groups of us to forsake our function as parts of the whole—even if, as might well be the case for relatively isolated individuals and communities, we saw a chance now to turn our backs to the world, and let it go its way while we go ours—we could not long succeed: All of us are essential parts of an interdependent economic and social machinery that in the long run simply will not let us be separate and independent.

We couldn't remain unaffected by the outside world, merely by wishing to, any more than the small neutral nations of Europe could remain unaffected by the European war merely by wishing to.

Grandfather bought this farm originally, at least so family tradition has it, for \$1.25 an acre. The house and the other buildings on the place were constructed, a little at a time, largely by his own labor, and at least in part from materials off his own land. He never had to go into debt. He never had to lay out much cash. When he first drove west from Ohio, all of his original capital was in his pocket or in his wagon.

Suppose the same young man were starting out from Ohio today with a team, a wagon, a plow, a few tools, a cow, and \$200 in his pocket—where would he find a rich quarter section of Iowa land for \$1.25 an acre? He'd have to lay

out about \$100 an acre, which is \$16,000—a tidy sum for a young fellow of 21 to start life with. And our social problems today can hardly be said to center around young men with \$16,000.

If, however, a young man who wants to establish himself on such a farm could induce some capitalist to lend him enough to buy such a farm, and then to equip and stock it well enough to have any chance to pay out, he would be loaded at the very beginning with a debt of at least \$20,000, which he would have to pay back with interest.

By the very best terms he could ordinarily hope to get, he would have to lay out in cash at least \$1,500 annually on amortization, interest charges, taxes, and necessary insurance and upkeep. And to whatever extent he wanted or felt he needed a telephone, electricity, an auto or tractor or truck, and all the things that go with them, to whatever extent he ever wanted to see a movie, or attend the state fair, or improve his crop yields by better seed, he would increase his need for ready cash—cash on the barrel head.

It is perfectly apparent that he could not possibly meet his obligations and at the same time retire from the world and get the kind of subsistence security that prevailed on Grandfather's farm 25 or 30 years ago.

He would need cash to a degree that Grandfather never did. He would simply have to make himself a part of the whole national economic machine, rather than a complete and wholly independent little economy in the way my Grandfather succeeded in doing.

All this may seem merely an elaboration of the obvious.

And yet I wonder if we know it as well as we think we do. I wonder if we are willing to accept fully the implications of these things. We recognize our social and economic dependencies when they are pointed out. We are willing to admit (when we must) that, as individuals or groups, we are hung as by our teeth to a whole whereof we are but parts. Yet when we act, we insist most of the time upon acting as autonomous groups and individuals who succeed or fail regardless of others and regardless of the working of the whole.

### *Now: The Industrial Revolution*

We form into pressure groups, each intent on making its own share of the gravy the biggest, when actually the crucial matter is the total amount of gravy—and that can be increased only by better teamwork and a higher degree of coordination of parts.

The Industrial Revolution, which men have been talking about for a century, is just beginning to be felt in its full force. Its overwhelming social effect has been to make us dependent on one another.

Up to now we have observed the technological progress that passes under the name of the industrial revolution without any real comprehension of its inevitable social implications. Most of us have been inclined merely to marvel at the applications of modern science and to accept their material blessings with never so much as a suspicion that drastic alterations in our ways of living together would eventually have to follow. And so, with ideas and institutions that derived from an



earlier age when the economic independence of the individual, the family, or the community was not only a possibility but a common and working reality, we have plunged as fast and as far as we possibly could into a condition of extreme economic specialization that has almost completely destroyed the real independence of every individual, every family, and every social group.

There can be no question that the individual in modern society is entirely at the mercy of things and events over which, as an individual, he has no control. He cannot get a job, he cannot hold a job, he cannot get a farm, he cannot hold a farm, he cannot be secure in the possessions he has nor aspire to others, without the favor of events that he has absolutely no power, by the older, individualized techniques, to determine.

His personal fate and the fate of all his family depend precariously upon remote, unseen events.

This is as much true of groups, of particular interests, of localities, as it is of individuals. An endless chain of dependency has been created that is partly a matter of finance, partly a matter of organization, but always is based upon the specialization resulting from modern technology. This condition has converted industries and groupings that are nominally independent and entire into mere cogs in a vast and complex economic machine.

A Connecticut town is left stranded and helpless if something happens to a Michigan industry that it supplies with tools. The workers in a Pennsylvania steel mill have jobs or not, depending on who gets the bid to build a Mississippi River bridge. A county in California can-

not possibly prosper beyond the extent to which urban workers 3,000 miles east of them have money enough to buy lettuce and oranges.

### *Our Skills, Too, Are Limited*

Our economic dependencies are only a part—though perhaps the most crucial as well as the most obvious part—of dependencies that extend through every phase of our lives. The field of our individual competence of judgment has narrowed in proportion as the collective knowledge of mankind has broadened. There was a time when a well-informed, practical man could have a respectable understanding of all of the crafts, processes, and products that contributed to his everyday living. But this kind of universal knowledge has long since ceased as a human possibility.

As far as comprehension of the dominant activities and forces in our lives is concerned, we live partially and by segments. We experience only a very few of the complete processes that are essential to us and comprehend only disjointed parts of things. We get corn out of cans, shoes out of a box, and automobiles out of show windows. In most cases we do not know their origin, or how they got to us. Our dress, our recreations, most of our possessions are determined by remote unknowns and come to us in a pattern cut to fit the multitude. Even the thoughts we think, along with the goods we consume, are the mass-production product of a machine age.

### *Buying and Getting, We Lose Our Powers*

Grandfather had control of all of the economic factors and forces that

affected him and his family. They enjoyed the direct rewards of their own labors; they succeeded or failed according to their own efforts. When troubles developed or difficulties arose, their causes were sure to be found right there on that farm.

But the world has changed.

Whether we thrive or fail depends on the price of the cotton, the wheat, and the potatoes we sell, and on the cost of the clothing, the fuel, and the machinery we have to buy.

It depends on markets in Minneapolis and Chicago, in New York and Liverpool.

It depends on stock exchange transactions and financial manipulations in La Salle Street and Wall Street.

It depends on whether Pennsylvania miners and New York garment workers have money to buy our beef.

It depends on whether some foreign country decides to buy our wheat or sets out to raise its own.

It depends on freight charges and interest rates.

It depends on the price we must pay for tractors and combines and gasoline and overalls and Diesel oil and cotton cloth. And it depends on whether factories and mines keep open or whether they close because no profits are in prospect for those who control them.

### *We Have Tried to Pretend*

And we can't control these things by plowing closer at the corners or by putting on extra manure or by planting 10 more acres of wheat. The farm family with a feed bill to pay, fuel to buy, mortgage payments to think of, can meet those obliga-

tions only to the extent that outside forces permit. They cannot, by their work on the farm, set the prices of wheat or beef or overalls or lubricating oil, or establish the interest rates.

Our insecurity has arisen from the fact that although we are plainly dependent upon outside forces over which (as individuals and as small groups) we have had no control, we have continued to act a good deal of the time on the assumption that we could attain security merely by doing the sort of things that gave us security when our condition was truly independent.

We have tried to pretend that we were not dependent upon the outside world. We have tried to convince ourselves that if only we could exercise the frugality and hard work of our grandfathers we would be as independent as they were, overlooking the fact that, unlike our grandfathers, we are tied to each other and to the whole world.

There is no reason why the specialization that has made us so interdependent should be calamitous. There is, in fact, good reason to believe that this specialization in the long run should make us richer in material goods and more secure. But it will never obtain security for us if we continue to act upon the assumption that we are not members of a team. It will never make us secure so long as we persist in acting as though the distress that is brought about fundamentally by remote causes can be cured by purely local measures.

Indeed, a great deal can be done locally by individuals, by communities, by counties, and by States to relieve the hardship and suffering that afflict so many people.

No doubt many practices common on my grandfather's farm that have been forgotten or neglected, if practiced today, could bring to many rural people at least some small degree of added security.

### *Grandfather's Way Can Cure Symptoms*

Many a farm family today could improve its level of living by increasing its degree of self-sufficiency at least to the point of providing more of its own food—more home dairy products, more products from the garden, more preserving of fruits and vegetables, more curing of home-grown meat.

But while such measures may sometimes relieve the symptoms, they ignore the cause.

We have got to deal with causes, and think in terms of the whole. We have got to find means to control and to direct those outside anarchic forces which now prevent individuals and small groups from attaining security through their own efforts and by their own industry and brains and thrift.

We must find devices by which to control external influences enough so that individuals have a decent chance to earn their own security. This can't be done by single individuals acting alone, nor can it be done in this great country by the isolated actions of small groups or localities. It can't be done, either, by preachments concerning the virtues of industry and thrift.

### *Order in Anarchic Economics*

It's silly to tell men to work hard when they can't find a job, when

there are millions of unemployed. It's silly to tell a young man to work hard and be a good farmer when he can't start farming without capital that he hasn't got and can't expect realistically to acquire with the opportunities before him.

We have got to develop, democratically, policies on a national scale that will bring meaning and order into an anarchic economic system. We have got to see to it that some means is found for keeping factories going that are 20 or 2,000 miles away, for those factories are as vital to the prosperity of farmers as their own farms.

Only when there is a rational co-ordination of the whole national economy, in which we all share, will we be free from the effects of outside events. And only when that is accomplished will the local measures of local groups bring the full benefits we hope for.

We must increase employment in industry, and make factories keep going. We have got to develop over-all controls that the people may command and that will give the people the same control of their national economy that my grandfather had over his individualized and independent economy. But we will never get such progress until the mass of people understand the need and insist upon the necessary measures. The impulse must come from the grass roots, but the people at the grass roots must know the importance of what lies beyond far horizons.

We are rapidly approaching a crisis that too many people have as yet no real understanding of.

We are inexorably headed toward an increase of deliberate controls

over our economy. That is as sure, in the long run, as the fact, now evident beyond all debate, that our intertwined, specialized economy is as a whole stronger and more dynamic than any of its parts.

### *Who Will Control Our Economy?*

Henceforth the only issue can be, Who will exercise these controls, and whose interests will they serve? Can we, in a rational and democratic manner, perceive our dependencies, and, on the basis of such a broad understanding restore to the mass of men the control of those economic factors that the progress of the industrial revolution has, up to now, taken from them?

Or will we use the controls, already privately established in many cases in the forms of trusts, monopolies, trade associations, and so on, to strengthen the position of the few who now benefit, comparatively, by a "system" that permits them to exploit, for their private profit, crucial parts of an economy on which we are all dependent?

For a time perhaps, we may still ride along on the impulse from the past, and be as complacent as we wish about unemployed men, idle factories, dispossessed farmers, and declining opportunities for a surplus rural population. But we should remember that the assumption of the gradualist must be that changes are made as ills arise. When they accumulate, we are headed for trouble. Distress and confusion, from which so many of our people have suffered, if long continued, eventually will lead to a state of des-

---

---

*When tillage begins, other arts follow. The farmers, therefore, are the founders of human civilization.*

—DANIEL WEBSTER

---

---

peration that may well bring a violent kind of solution that no one in a calm moment would contemplate.

And if we do not fairly soon find rational and democratic methods to solve the over-all problems that have created so much trouble locally in every county in the nation, we may find ourselves headed for the kind of violent solution that the countries of Europe have been forced into by essentially the same set of problems.

### *Defense of Democracy*

The only defense of democracy is to make it work so successfully for the benefit of the mass of men that they will be willing to die rather than give it up.

When it fails to provide opportunity, when it long allows conditions to prevail that destroy the efforts of common men to attain security and humble decency, when it drives millions into a position that makes them feel that society has no place for them, when it worships the past too much and allows established privileges and outworn economic theories to prevent practical reform of real and immediate problems, then democracy is on the way to committing suicide.

That happened in Europe. And that is what we must avoid in America.

# Land and Work Chances

## For the Lowest Third

By LOUIS H. BEAN. *The expected rise in industrial activity and national income as a result of greatly increased defense expenditures has a direct bearing on rural welfare. What are the prospects of an improved rural level of living, of a better distribution of income among farm families? An answer is given here. It is none too reassuring, but it sets out one of the most important tasks before us.*



AT THE OUTBREAK of the present war, it was clear that our foreign markets for farm products would be further restricted, and that the problem of surplus manpower in the South and Middle West would be intensified. It appeared also that urban industries, even at the quickened pace stimulated by the war, would not absorb all the urban unemployed, to say nothing of surplus agricultural labor. This situation logically pointed to the need for a rural works program to provide jobs for the excess rural manpower to conserve our natural resources. The answer to both rural and urban unemployment was the greater utilization of private capital, of government capital, or of both.

To some extent this situation has been altered by the defense program. It has already stimulated industry and raised the demand for some agricultural products. It is moving some agricultural as well as urban labor into military activity and into work financed by defense expendi-

tures. What the total effect will be we cannot yet foresee. But it will not lead to the complete absorption of surplus agricultural capacity or of surplus agricultural labor. We shall still have these twin problems.

Suppose the Government spends for defense purposes \$5,000,000,000 for the fiscal year 1940-41 and \$10,000,000,000 for the fiscal year 1941-42, in addition to its previous provisions for defense activities. Along with this program will necessarily go an increased flow of private capital into plant and equipment. Together, the public and the private investment will induce a marked increase in the production of durable goods. It will also bring about an increased demand and an increased production of goods for current consumption. As a result, our industrial production in 1942 may be fully 20 percent greater than the average for 1940. This could bring the employment of persons in nonagricultural pursuits up to 40 million or 41 million, as compared with about 36 million persons at

present. It could raise the national income to about \$90,000,000,000.

These figures obviously have an important bearing on the problem of surplus agricultural labor. Employment now in all nonagricultural activities is practically the same as it was in 1929. It is approximately 10 million persons greater than at the bottom of the depression in March 1933. Hence, the problem of non-agricultural employment is to absorb the increase in the working population since 1929. The defense program, if it stimulates employment of 4 million to 5 million additional persons by 1942, will go a long way toward absorbing the urban unemployed. But it may not go the whole way. There will still remain the problem of rural unemployment, even though some rural people will be drawn into defense jobs and defense-stimulated activities.

### *Defense May Not Remove Farm Labor Surplus*

Between 1930 and 1940, as a result of population growth and reduced cityward migration, the working population on farms increased by about 1,600,000. Meanwhile, the decline of the demand for export crops reduced the need for manpower on farms. It is unlikely that the defense program, at any rate within the next year or two, will absorb any substantial part of this excess rural manpower, except to the extent that it draws on unemployed rural rather than on unemployed urban labor.

It should be borne in mind, however, that the distinction between urban and rural labor is nowadays by no means sharp. There is a constant interchange of personnel be-

tween town and country. Thousands of persons on farms have worked in cities at some time or other and thousands more through their experience with machinery and otherwise are good material for urban employment. It is desirable for many reasons, among them the advisability of decentralizing industry as much as possible, that rural labor should share in the opportunities created by the defense program, and undoubtedly in some measure it will. Nevertheless, the fact remains that, on a net basis as far as we can see now, defense industries in the next couple of years or so will not make any large inroad into the surplus of rural manpower.

In 1942 the total labor force of the country may be 58 million. One of several assumptions that may be made is that the employment of non-agricultural labor may amount to 40.5 million persons. That would leave something like 17 million persons to be employed or accounted for in the other lines. Some 12 million people are in agriculture.

### *2,000,000 Too Many Farm Workers in 1942?*

Without considering from a social standpoint what would be the proper number of persons on farms, it may be observed that perhaps not more than 9 million or 10 million are needed to produce for the domestic markets and for diminished exports. Reckoning by this process of rough approximation, we shall have a surplus labor problem of about 7 million persons in 1942, of whom 1.5 million may need to be retained on relief work, 1.5 million may be inducted into military service, while

about 2 million may be considered to represent the normal unemployment even of prosperity years, and about 2 million will be surplus labor in agriculture.

This last figure assumes that some withdrawal of farm youths into industrial and defense programs will take place. The industrial activity that is being developed by the defense program will undoubtedly draw some labor from the farms, and military enlistments also will do so. These withdrawals will reduce the surplus farm labor force; they may check the increase in the population on farms, and in a year or two may reduce it moderately. But what will happen if industrial activity declines after 1942? Some of the former rural labor will go back to the farms. Added to the remaining surplus of rural manpower, it may help to cause another farm crisis. While our major task at the moment is to build up our defenses as quickly as possible, at the same

time we ought to develop safeguards against a possible let down from the 1941-42 defense efforts.

If the national income approximates \$90,000,000,000 in 1942 compared with nearly \$75,000,000,000 in 1940, what is likely to be the accompanying money income of farmers? Farm cash income with Government payments may amount to \$9,000,000,000 in 1940.

### *Export Recovery Is Not In Sight*

This may be compared with \$4,682,000,000 in 1932, and \$11,221,000,000 in 1929. Moreover, the prices paid by farmers for goods and services were lower in 1940 than in 1929. The 1940 money income of farmers had a purchasing power about 80 percent greater than that of 1932 and about 5 percent greater than that of 1929, barely enough to offset the increase in the number of persons living on farms.

TABLE I.—*Distribution of gross farm income in the United States, 1899 and 1929, in each of 10 equal groups of farms, arranged according to size of income*

Group	Percent of farms	Percent of total gross income from farm production		
		1899	1929	Difference
1.....	0- 10	0.8	1.1	+0.3
2.....	10- 20	1.9	2.3	+ .4
3.....	20- 30	3.3	3.0	— .3
4.....	30- 40	4.7	4.0	— .7
5.....	40- 50	5.6	5.2	— .4
6.....	50- 60	6.9	6.5	— .4
7.....	60- 70	8.9	8.9	0
8.....	70- 80	11.8	11.5	— .3
9.....	80- 90	16.4	16.3	— .1
10.....	90-100	39.7	41.2	+1.5

(Derived from Census of Agriculture, 1899 and 1929.)

Farm cash income from marketings will probably be determined in large measure in the next few years by the purchasing power of domestic consumers. Export recovery is not in sight. In fact, the loss of exports is bound to be an offsetting influence. But even if farm cash income has the usual relation to the total national income, and the present governmental supports to farm prices and farm marketings remain in force, farm cash income from marketings in 1942 may not exceed \$10,000,000,000, by very much. Government payments in addition, should they amount to \$700,000,000, will give a total probably not in excess of \$11,000,000,000. Part of this advance over the 1940 figure, moreover, could be absorbed by a rise in prices paid by farmers for goods and services.

Thus any improvement that may take place in total farm income over the next 2 years as a result of the defense program will not be great. (This assumes no price inflation.) Whatever the increase, it will be shared perhaps even more disproportionately than usual. Ordinarily half of all farms obtain 85 percent of all gross income from farm production, and the other half receives 15 percent.

With the kind of maldistribution of farm income (which changed very little during the 30-year interval between 1899 and 1929), most of the increase will go to that half of our farmers who produce the bulk of the marketed farm products. And with the loss of foreign markets hitting the South so heavily, the region of predominantly low income farms, there is even less prospect of increasing the share of farm income

of the lowest third. There will still be urgent need of nonagricultural sources of income to farmers now living on a subsistence level, and of more industrial opportunities for surplus farm population. The defense program will supply the need in part, but other action will also be required. Especially is there need for more effective collaboration among farm labor and business groups to help more farmers shift from export crops to production for their own home use and more farmers to get nonfarm sources of income.

Even if progress can be made in this direction, farmers in general must have an expanded domestic market and particularly an expanded market among the low-income groups of the urban and rural non-farm population. Here, too, there is maldistribution of income.

In 1935-36 the lowest third among urban families had 11 percent of the total income available to that group, and the highest third had 65 percent. This may be compared with about the same distribution among farm families where the lowest third received 12 percent, and the highest third 62 percent of the income available to farm families. (Farm income in this case is net after deducting production expenses and including income from non-farming sources.)

This distribution of income among farm and nonfarm families indicates a potential market for farm products provided the lower third in each group can obtain more income. It may be argued similarly that industrial workers must have an expanded domestic market; they, too, are likely to feel a shrinkage in exports.



## Farm People: A Frontier For Expanded Outlets

The farm population, greatly in need of a higher standard of living, is in effect industry's new frontier for an expanded outlet for industrial goods and services. Farmers generally can serve this purpose, however, only if they, too, have a larger income. The key to this all-around increase in buying power is increased balanced production in town and country; and since we are not confronted by any lack of farm production, the problem is basically one of more industrial activity and non-farming occupations for surplus farm labor.

Effort in this direction would promote progress toward a more even distribution of consumer income, because it is easier to obtain a fairer distribution of abundance than of scarcity.

Yet raising the totals does not cure the trouble automatically. Between 1899 and 1929 the national income quintupled, with agriculture participating in the increase. In that period, the national income advanced

from about \$16,000,000,000 to more than \$80,000,000,000.

In 1899, 33 percent of all the farms had only 8 percent of the total farm income. Essentially the same kind of farm income distribution prevailed in 1929, although the total farm income then was much larger.

In 1929, the lowest 33 percent still had only about 8 percent of the total farm income. At the other extreme, 10 percent of the farms in the highest income brackets had nearly 40 percent of the gross farm income in 1899, and 41 percent in 1929.

Apparently we need to attack the problem of income distribution and the problem of producing more income together, for in the past we have advanced farther toward the latter, than toward the former, objective.

### Narrowing the Gap Between Income Groups

This neglect we could indulge in formerly when land opportunities were relatively abundant and when the Nation's savings found outlets

TABLE II.—Distribution of gross income from farm production and of incomes of farm, rural-nonfarm and urban families among the lower, middle, and upper thirds

	Lower third	Middle third	Upper third	Total
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
Gross farm income 1899 <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	8	21	71	100
Gross farm income 1929 <sup>1</sup> . . . . .	8	20	72	100
Income of farm families 1935-36 <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	12	26	62	100
Income of rural-nonfarm families 1935-36 <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	11	25	64	100
Income of urban families 1935-36 <sup>2</sup> . . . . .	11	24	65	100

<sup>1</sup> Derived from Census of Agriculture 1899 and 1929.

<sup>2</sup> Based on National Resources Planning Board Estimates of Consumer Incomes.

freely in new private enterprise. But our outlets for internal and external investments are no longer the automatic opportunities they used to be.

Our relations to the outside world have changed so markedly in recent years that we cannot depend on foreign markets any longer to serve as a sufficient outlet for our surplus labor and production capacity. In these circumstances, we can no longer wisely continue to neglect our potential markets among the lowest third within our own borders. It is, in fact, important to develop new internal markets for industrial goods and to create nonfarming opportunities for the farm population

that can no longer depend on foreign markets.

Unfortunately, we heretofore have given so little thought to the proper distribution of income and so much thought to the means of increasing the aggregate volume that we know relatively little as to the desirable distribution balance between the high and the low income groups. But it is now generally agreed that if we begin to look upon our lowest third in the cities and on farms as our new markets, as we create more national income, we can do a better job than in the past in seeing to it that the gap between the lower and the upper income groups is narrowed to the general interest of all groups.

---

---

## Dilemma

*Here is a dilemma. Scientific advances in agriculture constantly release labor at a time when employment opportunities are no longer open in urban industry. In fact, industry has an unemployment problem of its own; and the service and professional occupations are limited by the inadequate purchasing power of consumers of these services.*

—TECHNOLOGY ON THE FARM

---

---

# Land Clearing

## IN THE NORTHWEST

By WILLARD W. TROXELL and HARRY J. VOTH. *Removal of stumps from land to be cultivated is an interesting subject in the way that all frontier operations are intriguing, now that our frontier has vanished. But it is more—it involves the economics of costs and returns and is important in the reclamation of land.*



BEFORE THE WHITE man came with his saw and ax, almost the entire area of Oregon and Washington west of the Cascade Mountains was covered by a dense forest of big trees. Douglas fir predominated, but there were also cedar, spruce, and other species.

The forest has been the base of the economy of this region, but to settlers following in the wake of logging operations it has not been an unmixed blessing. Measured by ordinary standards, the stumps are enormous. Diameters of 4 to 5 feet are common, and occasional stumps 8 feet or larger are encountered.

It takes little imagination to picture the back-breaking labor required to clear a few acres of this cut-over land without the aid of machinery.

Blasting, stump-pullers, donkey engines, and special methods of burning have reduced the labor and cost of preparing the land for agriculture, but until recently it remained an expensive, laborious undertaking.

About 10 years ago the bulldozer

was developed for trail and road building. A bulldozer is a steel blade 7 to 10 feet long, mounted in front of a tractor in such a way that it can be raised or lowered by the operator. It is an efficient instrument for shallow digging in loose soil, leveling ground, and similar operations. This device came into use for land clearing about 2 or 3 years ago, and has effected an astonishing reduction in the cost.

The tractors used in this work are of the track type with Diesel or "controlled ignition" oil engines. In size they vary from a 36-horsepower machine weighing about 11,200 pounds to 96 horsepower, weight 33,600 pounds. The cost of the tractor and bulldozer ranges from about \$5,500 to about \$12,000, depending on size and accessories.

The bulldozers are of varying design. The ordinary type of curved blade, designed for moving earth, is sometimes used. Special land-clearing blades are equipped with heavy teeth that extend about 18 inches below the blade. These teeth are in some cases removable and adjustable for depth. Some bull-

dozers have a wedge mounted at one side and extending forward beyond the blade for splitting stumps.

The usual procedure is first to blast the large stumps, using just enough powder to crack them and loosen the roots without throwing the stumps out of the ground. Many old stumps are rotten enough so that no "shooting" is required. Old cedar stumps are usually hollow and do not need to be cracked. Smaller stumps, say 24 inches or less, if not green, can readily be removed by a large bulldozer without cracking.

### *Machines and Methods*

After a stump has been cracked, the bulldozer pries the pieces loose, digs around it where necessary to cut off and remove lateral roots, then pushes the pieces of stump out of the ground. The machine shoves the fragments of stump, roots, and other debris into a pile or windrow in a part of the field previously cleared, backfills the hole, and is then ready for the next stump. After the stumps have been removed, the land can be smoothed by the machine, if desired.

If care is not exercised to locate and remove all roots above plow depth, the farmer will encounter them in his plowing and will have to take them out himself. A considerable amount of hand labor is required in picking up small pieces of wood and roots and placing them in piles. This work is best performed by two or three men while the machine is at work, thus preventing the small pieces from being buried by the tractor.

The final operation is burning the debris and smoothing the

ground that has been occupied by the piles. This is usually done by the farmer at his convenience after the machine work is finished. The windrows or piles do not cover much ground, so it is possible to grow a crop on two-thirds or more of the field while waiting for a favorable time to burn the debris. If the bulldozer is available after the first firing it can be used to bunch the unburned material, or this may be done by the farmer himself with the aid of a team or tractor.

Where the land is covered with brush or second-growth trees, it is the practice in some areas for the farmer himself to slash and remove the trees and brush, leaving only the stumps to be taken care of by the machine. It is probable, however, that this preliminary surface clearing could not be justified by the saving in machine time unless a very low value is placed on the farmer's labor. The bulldozer can readily clear up brush and small trees as part of the stump removal operation and do it more cheaply than it can be done by hired labor.

While the bulldozer has established itself as the best type of equipment for land clearing, it is still in the stage of development and controversy with respect to details. Argument rages as to the best size of tractor, the hydraulic versus the cable lift, and the merits and demerits of teeth and splitting wedges. But new ideas are being tried constantly, and if successful, are widely adopted.

### *Contracts Are of Three Kinds*

Since the equipment is much too costly for farmers to own, practi-

cally all of the machine work is being done by contractors, or by cooperative associations such as the Agnew Land Clearing Service of Clallam County, Wash., which was sponsored and financed by the Farm Security Administration, and the Skamania County Land Clearing Association. Many of the contractors have been road builders or loggers who have started in the land clearing business as a means of keeping their equipment working in slack times, and some have gone into it as a full-time business.

The contracts are of three kinds, lump sum, a stipulated amount per acre, or an hourly charge for the machine and operator. Lump sum or per acre contracts may cover machine work only, machine work plus shooting, or a complete job, including burning. Hourly rate contracts cover only the machine work, usually including the wages of the operator and sometimes a foreman who acts also as powderman.

Under the usual hourly rate contract, the owner is responsible for the shooting, burning, and miscellaneous labor. Hourly rates range from \$3.50 an hour charged by the Clallam County cooperative for a 45 horsepower tractor, up to \$7 or \$8 an hour charged by others for more powerful machines.

These rates include the driver's wages.

Like all contracting businesses where costs are largely determined by underground conditions that cannot be fully appraised beforehand, land clearing contains a considerable element of gambling.

Lump-sum and per acre contracts place all of the risk on the contractor, who naturally tries to get the

price high enough to cover all hazards. With the hourly charge, the risk is divided; uncertainty as to the time required falls on the landowner, and the risk of breakdown and other machine hazards are borne by the contractor. Hourly rate contracts are more flexible and more equitable than other forms, but many farmers hesitate to go into a clearing venture without knowing in advance exactly what the total cost will be.

### *Costs—\$12 to \$105 an Acre*

The cost of clearing depends on the resultant effect of many variable factors acting in combination. The machine time and the amount of explosive required depend on the number, species, size, and condition of the stumps; the amount of second growth timber and brush; the amount of down timber; the kind and condition of the soil; the equipment used; the skill of the driver; and the judgment and skill of the powderman.

The contractor must set his price high enough to cover the cost of moving the machine, a highly variable item that depends on the weight of the equipment and distances to be moved, as well as compensation for his own time and effort and other overhead costs.

Costs of clearing under fairly typical conditions in the Douglas fir region are illustrated by data collected in the summer of 1939 from 43 clearing contracts, aggregating about 550 acres, on farms in Skamania, Lewis, Thurston, Pierce, and King Counties in Washington. The costs varied from \$12 an acre for fairly open ground with very few scattered large stumps and

sparse cover of small trees or brush to \$105 an acre for land thickly covered with stumps, including many large ones.

These are costs to the landowner, and include explosives, blasting labor, bulldozer work and a small amount of hired labor for picking up; cost of burning the piles of debris is not included. On two-thirds of the jobs the costs ranged from \$30 to \$75 per acre. Eighteen jobs, or 42 percent of the total, were in the range from \$35 to \$60. Contracts exceeding \$100 per acre are rarely encountered. There is possibly a considerable amount of land in the Northwest which would cost more than \$100 to clear by the bulldozer method, but owners of such land are seldom willing to pay for it. Clearing similar to the \$105 an acre contract is reported to have cost \$200 to \$250 or more by older methods.

In areas where big trees are not so common as in western Washington, clearing costs are correspondingly lower. Some available information indicates that cash costs, covering machine time, operator, and powder, may be as low as \$15 an acre on fairly typical cut-over land in northern Idaho.

### *Clearing Land for Settlers*

With the heavy influx of farmers from the Great Plains following the droughts of 1934 and 1936, the relative scarcity of suitable farm units in the Northwest became apparent. Many newcomers bought cut-over land and have started clearing by hand-labor methods, supplemented by animal power and blasting, but usually only a very few arable acres are added by all the time the farmer

can spare for this work in a year. The bulldozer can greatly speed up this slow, laborious process and release the farmer's labor power for more remunerative enterprises.

There are thousands of acres of cut-over land in the Northwest which would be suitable for cultivation if cleared. Not all of it, however, would be productive enough to justify the cost.

Both earning power of the land and clearing costs vary widely, so that only by balancing capitalized earning power, or value, against estimated clearing costs plus purchase price can any proposed undertaking be justified. With clearing costs below \$100 an acre, it is feasible to bring into cultivation a considerable acreage if the purchase price is reasonable. Clearing of much of the poorer land, or land on which clearing is unusually difficult, would not be justified even if the land could be acquired for nothing.

Before any clearing project is inaugurated, a careful determination of economic feasibility should be made for the specific tracts under consideration.

When allowance is made for all the costs involved, including a reasonable compensation for the farmer's own labor, the bulldozer method is in most cases much cheaper than others, is far more rapid, and is adapted to use under all conditions save only where the ground is too soft to support the machine.

But this method has the disadvantage that it requires an immediate cash outlay of considerable amount. Burning stumps in place by blower or charpitting requires little or no cash, but takes a great

deal of patience, skill, and labor. A farmer can utilize spare time in this fashion and thus clear additional land at little or no cash cost, but, even so, many are unwilling to put in so much labor for so small a return.

### *Costs of Using Bulldozers*

The use of bulldozers is preferred by those who can raise the money. A settler must have at the start sufficient cleared acreage to provide a livelihood, or his family must be supported out of savings or from other sources until the farm yields the necessary income. Rapid clearing by machine of at least enough acres to produce the family's minimum requirements is the plan that appears best in developing new farms.

The farmer's cash outlay can be kept to a minimum and his labor utilized efficiently if he will do the blasting, picking up, and burning, himself. If he does his own blasting it should be under the advice of someone who is experienced in the work, in order that neither powder nor machine time will be wasted. If extra help is required at any stage of the operation, an arrangement to exchange labor with neighbors will do away with the necessity for hiring any men. This leaves only the explosive and the machine work to be paid for.

Keeping the cost of the machine work down is a problem in organization and management. If the acreage to be cleared is large enough, it may pay the owner or agency carrying out the project to buy the machinery. Most clearing will average probably 4 to 8 hours of machine time to the acre.

### *Forming Cooperative Groups*

In a probable working life of 10,000 hours, one machine could clear a total area of the order of 1,200 to 2,500 acres over a period of about 3 to 5 years. Selection of the proper equipment and the hiring of a qualified man to operate it are obviously important. Moving costs can be minimized by scheduling the work so that moves by truck will be infrequent. Operations even as small as 20 to 25 acres between truck moves will keep the cost of moving the usual type of equipment down to \$2 to \$3 an acre at most.

Where there are no private contractors in the business or where contract charges are excessive, the formation of cooperative associations may be advisable.

The Agnew Land Clearing Service in Clallam County is an example. This organization was sponsored by the Farm Security Administration, which advanced \$6,000 for purchase of the equipment. Five local farmers, known as the "master borrowers," signed personal notes to obtain the loan. These master borrowers receive a small amount of free bulldozer work as compensation for their risk. One of these men acts as manager and receives 50 cents an hour for the time he puts in and 5 cents a mile for the running expenses of his automobile. Before the money is lent, the members of the association must sign in advance for 5,000 hours of operation.

Cooperatives can effect savings through adding together many small jobs to form a project of sufficient size to gain the benefits of scheduling the work to reduce mov-

ing costs and idle time to a minimum. Overhead charges are not avoided, however.

### *Three Results From Land Clearing*

Efficient management is a basic requirement. The actual work of organizing the cooperative and persuading the farmers to join has to be contributed free by someone. It is not necessary in all cases for a cooperative to buy the machinery. The organization could make a contract on an hourly rental basis with someone who owns a machine. If the organization can guarantee the owner several months' or a year's steady work, a low rate could probably be agreed on, since there would be no selling expense and the risk of idle time would be reduced. Where there are a number of competent land-clearing contractors competing for business the formation of a cooperative to purchase and operate a bulldozer would probably be inadvisable.

It is reported that in the Northwest many thousands of acres of State- and county-owned land and tax-delinquent land would be suitable for cultivation if cleared, and it has often been proposed that this land be cleared and sold to settlers. The use of relief labor in the work has been advocated.

Offhand, this seems to be a sound idea and would accomplish three results: It would provide opportunity for more people to earn a living from farming, it would increase the tax base and economic activity of the counties and State, and it would provide useful work for relief clients. Surveys would be required for selection of the land

---

## *Moderation*

*The authority of the prince must be defended by a military force; that force can only be maintained by taxes; all taxes must, at least, fall upon agriculture; and agriculture can never flourish except under the protection of justice and moderation.*

—ARTAXERXES, KING OF THE  
PERSIANS

---

and determination of the best way to organize and finance these projects.

But, in order to keep the settlers' financial burden and the subsidy, if any contributed by the public, to a minimum, the cheapest known method of clearing should be used.

In nearly all cases this means machine work, which involves relatively little unskilled labor and hence is not suitable for relief projects that require a high ratio of labor to total cost. Land clearing is, however, suitable for public works projects if there are no restrictions as to the proportion of the money that must go directly to labor. As much as possible of the unskilled labor should be done by the settlers themselves. When the clearing must be done before the settler moves in, the stump fragments, logs, and other debris can be left in piles or windrows to be burned after the new owner takes possession.



# War, Food,

## FARMING, AND PRICES

By O. C. STINE. *In this continuation of his article, 1917-1918: Lessons for a Later Day, in LAND POLICY REVIEW for November, Dr. Stine summarizes the role of American agriculture during the world war, and says: "Looking back, it seems obvious that the activities of the Food Administration and of the Department of Agriculture should have been more closely coordinated."*



PERHAPS THE BEST way to discuss the role of American agriculture in 1917-18 is from the standpoint of the major food problems that faced the United States Food Administration. The work of the Department of Agriculture and of other agencies was important, but it consisted mainly in a speeding up of ordinary peacetime activities. It was a change in degree, not in kind. The Food Administration, on the other hand, was concerned exclusively with wartime food problems.

No problem was more acute than the shortage of wheat. As the Allies' own production diminished, their demands for foreign wheat constantly increased.

Furthermore, because of the reduction of British tonnage through submarine warfare, it was doubtful if Australia and Argentina could ship their quotas to the Allies.

Such a demand upon our wheat fields brought with it a rise in wheat prices. No. 1 Northern Spring wheat went to \$3.15 a bushel on May 11, 1917, an all-time high. The Chicago Board of Trade, compelled

at this point to forbid trading in wheat futures, ordered a settlement of all outstanding contracts.

It might be assumed that, with wheat averaging nearly \$3, no further inducement would have been necessary to stimulate farmers to increase their acreage. But the fact of the matter was that few farmers had received anything like such prices. Most of the 1916 crop had been disposed of at prices below \$1.50 a bushel. Farm prices reached \$2.49 in June but the new 1917 crop began to move to market in July with farm prices averaging about \$2.20.

Only the President could set prices. To this end he appointed a committee of men of widely differing interests. They met in Washington August 20, 1917.

It is unnecessary to go into all the arguments for either a higher or lower price, according to the point of view involved. It is enough to note that with labor interests asking \$1.84, and the farmers \$2.50, they compromised on \$2.20.

A difference in viewpoint between Congress and the Food Ad-

ministration was noticeable. Congress provided a minimum for the 1918 crop; the Administration defined a "fair price" for the 1917 crop. The former was not to be effective for nearly a year; the latter was effective from its announcement. In effect, Congress acted to protect the producer, while the Administration had in mind both the producer and consumer.

### *Working of the License System*

The license system already referred to was put into effect, but a licensee could purchase wheat at prices higher than those fixed by the Government. Many of them did. In this, the licensee was doing nothing legally wrong—merely exhibiting an unwillingness to cooperate with the Government. With this loophole in the system, it was deemed necessary to establish some other control, and the United States Grain Corporation was set up for this purpose. It began active operations September 4, 1917. Its two chief functions were to purchase wheat for the United States and to control the license system.

The Corporation established buying agencies at all important markets and stood ready to purchase all wheat offered at the established price, thus maintaining a minimum price throughout the period of its active existence, from September 4, 1917, to May 31, 1920. In effect it fixed the price at this time during the period September 1917 to June 1918 and on a slightly higher level from that point until after the armistice.

Throughout the War, the Grain Corporation also undertook to see that an equitable distribution of

wheat supplies was made to American mills, and to control the prices at which flour and other products were sold by the mills and to the consumer. The Corporation was also charged with the control of all cereal supplies for export.

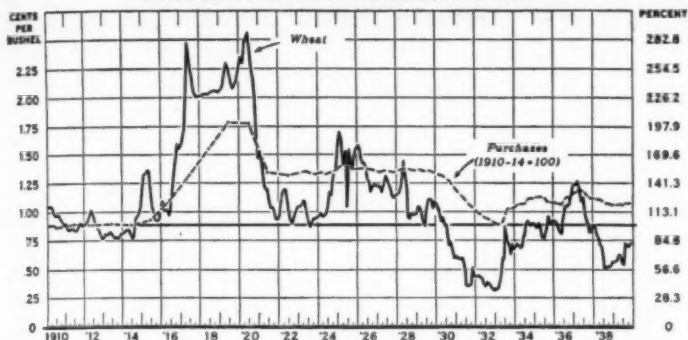
Another serious problem had to do with sugar. The drain upon Cuban and American stocks was reflected in its market price, and by August 1917 raw sugar prices had reached a point 11 percent higher than the average for the year preceding the outbreak of the world war. To check this rise, virtually the entire sugar industry was brought under the license system of the Food Administration by October 1, 1917. This licensing control limited the profits of the wholesaler and jobber to the pre-war normal, which averaged about 25 cents a hundredweight.

### *Problems of Sugar Prices and Production*

With the 1917-18 crop under control, it was necessary to take care of the next year's crop. It was estimated that this would come to 1,600,000 tons, and our requirement was 4,000,000 tons. The balance would have to be imported, with Cuba the logical provider.

But the wholesale price of sugar in the United States has been established at 9 cents after an investigation had disclosed that any smaller price would not allow the Louisiana cane producers and the western beet raisers a fair return, while Cuba sugar could be produced at 7½ cents and still leave a good profit. This disparity created problems so serious that it was decided some governmental form of equali-

# FARM PRICE OF WHEAT AND INDEX NUMBERS OF PRICES PAID BY FARMERS, 1910-39



zation would have to be put in practice. Accordingly, the United States Sugar Equalization Board was set up with a capital stock of \$5,000,000, subscribed by the Food Administration.

The Board entered into an agreement with the domestic producers to purchase all their beets and cane. It agreed also to purchase Cuba's entire sugar output. The Allied governments designated this Board to make purchases of them; the Board then made agreements with the refiners to obtain their supplies at 7.28 cents a pound. The refiners in turn agreed not to charge more than 1.54 cents a pound as a refining margin. The Board turned into the United States Treasury the profit it made on the price paid Cuban producers.

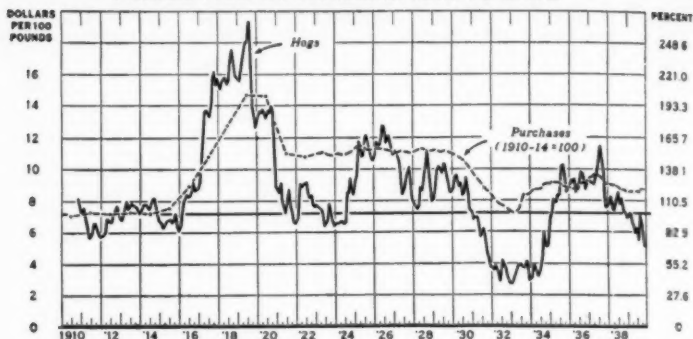
To round out the program, it was decided also to limit consumption. Supplies to confectioners and manufacturers of nonessential food-stuffs were severely limited. Public consumption was closely regulated. The amount a retailer could sell to a customer dropped to 2 pounds a month at one period.

The third major food problem was in regard to livestock and meat. The devastation of a large part of the European livestock area, the shortage of fodder, and the resulting increase in the annual slaughter combined to create a serious world shortage of meats and fats, despite a slight increase in American production. It was apparent that the large Allied demands would in time absorb our domestic supplies, but it was necessary that future shipments to the Allies must equal, if not exceed, those of 1916-17. Two methods, accordingly, were adopted to solve the meat problem—conservation through decreased consumption and stimulated production.

The main instrument of price control over beef and pork was the regulation of markets through purchases by the Food Administration, but to this was added a regulation of profits and a general supervision over the activities of the packing industry through the licensing system.

Probably in no other part of its work did the Food Administration have as much difficulty—and receive

# FARM PRICE OF HOGS AND INDEX NUMBERS OF PRICES PAID BY FARMERS, 1910 TO DATE



as much criticism—as here, although it was highly successful in its efforts to enlarge shipments of pork to the Allies. Many big packers resented governmental control; yet, on the other hand, they were charged by many with making exorbitant war-time profits. The Federal Trade Commission asserted, in fact: "Packers' profits in 1917 were more than four times as great as in the average year before the European war, although their sales in dollars and cents at even the inflated prices of last year had barely doubled."

The crux of the whole matter lay in hogs. The world was consuming its supply of fats much faster than it was producing them, and the production of hogs in large quantities was the quickest means of producing fats. On the grounds that market conditions were unstable, however, and that hog raising involved too much risk and not enough profit, many farmers raised other commodities.

A commission appointed by the Food Administration investigated the pork industry, and, pointing out

that the average ratio of corn to hog production was about 12 bushels to 100 pounds, advocated one of at least 13 to 1 to restore hog production to a more stable basis.

The administration ran into difficulties in enforcing this ratio, however, and early in September 1918, announced that the 13-bushel ratio was based on prices of corn on the farm and not in Chicago, despite its announcement specifically stating Chicago prices. This meant a reduction to the farmer of about \$2.50 a hundredweight. The Administration, explaining that its agreed price was too high for the export trade, then put the price at \$15.50 a hundredweight, which meant in effect a ratio of only 10.8. This brought on a storm of indignation and complaint from the farmers.

Hog prices fluctuated as before. They reached \$19.75 in September 1918, but (when reports of peace circulated in October) dropped to \$16.75. The Allies' post-war demands stimulated the price for a time, but their large withdrawals from the market during the sum-

mer and fall of 1919 caused a spectacular drop in quotations.

The other food problems and controls can be treated briefly.

### *Problems of Profit Control In Other Foods*

In regard to poultry and dairy products the Administration's problem was strictly one of profit control, and no definite price fixing was adopted. Licensing regulations and other efforts sought to prevent hoarding and intertrading, and to eliminate waste.

Cottonseed prices jumped to \$56.51 a ton by August 1917, an increase of 150 percent above the pre-war level. The main product, oil, went up 125 percent in the same period. Accordingly by Presidential proclamation, all ginner, crushers, refiners, and dealers in cottonseed, cottonseed oil, meal, and cake were placed under license on November 1, 1917.

The canning industry was regulated with little delay, particularly because it was shown that profits of some concerns showed an average increase of 9 to 32 percent in a single year.

Many other foodstuffs were regulated by the Food Administration. The methods used were generally either one or more of the type used to control the foods already mentioned. Among the more important of the goods thus controlled were coarse grains and feedstuffs, coffee, ammonia, ice, arsenic, oleomargarine, rice, and rice flour.

### *Criticisms and Complaints*

In 1920, in a privately printed report of the Food Administration,

Mr. Hoover charged that the Allies, as soon as the war was won, flatly broke their agreements with us in connection with their food purchases here and seriously imperilled our entire economy. The Administration head wrote feelingly that we built up a huge food surplus—specifically in fat products—for the benefit of the Allies, that we sold this food to the Allies at a restricted price, and thus after the war the moment the world price on these products fell below the stipulated price they had agreed to pay us, they quit buying from us.

As though he might have intended going into it later, Mr. Hoover wrote:

"It is not the time to discuss the attitude of some of the Allies in refusing to cooperate in these matters and the consequent jeopardy into which our whole commercial structure was placed by the failure of some of them to maintain an obvious obligation."

During its entire career, the Administration was subjected to scathing criticism, particularly from the agricultural interests. General criticism included the charges that its purpose was poorly conceived, that it exempted producers and retailers, and that it made no provision for maximum and minimum prices other than for wheat.

Many grain dealers felt that they had not been fairly treated by the Administration, and that it owed them money as a result of their operations during the war and immediately afterward. Bills calling for this money have been introduced many times in Congress. Even today, one is pending.

Another complaint was that the

Administration had disbanded too quickly after the war, and had left the farmer adjusted in many ways to a war economy—that is, to surplus production and surplus acreage. Since there was no longer a Food Administration to turn to, it was charged, the farmer was left to find his own solution to a problem which he had not been alone in bringing about.

The price of some farm products advanced after the abandonment of control, and continued on a high level through another year. In 1920 prices started to decline. Taking the average farm price of wheat to illustrate price movements associated with the war, the record reads: June 1916, \$1 a bushel; June 1917, \$2.48; November 1917, when price fixing set it back, an average of \$2. It remained within 10 cents of this level, averaging \$2.06 a year later, when the war ended.

Within a few months after the war, prices began to advance and reached the high average level of \$2.58 a bushel in June 1920, from which—within 2 years after the Armistice—a declining market dropped the average farm price back to below the dollar level.

From this record it seems apparent that the price of wheat was held during the period of the war at a level somewhat below what it would have been on a free market.

Although the price of wheat was set below the current market, winter wheat seedings increased from approximately 38,000,000 acres in the fall of 1916 to 51,000,000 in the fall of 1918; and the acreage of spring wheat harvested increased from 19,000,000 in 1916 to 24,000,000 in 1918.

These increases were doubtless

stimulated to some extent by the activities of the Department of Agriculture to induce farmers to grow more wheat. Judging from farmers' response in production, the fixed prices may have been high enough to contribute to an expansion of acreage.

The record of another controversial issue—hogs—reads as follows: The farm price averaged \$8.21 a hundredweight in June 1916, and \$13.50 in June 1917; the advance continued to \$16.15 in October and remained within one dollar of this level until after the Armistice.

Advances in 1919 carried the average price to \$19.30 in August of that year, from which the general decline carried prices back to below the \$9 level by December 1920. Inspected slaughter declined from 40,000,000 head in the year ended June 30, 1917, to about 35,000,000 in the following 12 months, but increased to more than 44,000,000 in the 12 months, July 1918 to June 1919. From this, the reason for taking action to obtain more pork is obvious, and the prompt response undoubtedly was stimulated by the advance in prices.

It seems obvious that the activities of the Food Administration and of the Department of Agriculture should have been more closely coordinated. Readjustments in production and prices could not have been avoided. The Food Administration should have been extended through a period of at least 5 years following the War, or its functions should have been merged into those of the Department of Agriculture so that the Federal Government might have contributed toward a more orderly liquidation of the war boom.

# Making the Most of WESTERN WILD LANDS

By MONT H. SAUNDERSON. *This article suggests several policy objectives for an area study of such "wild" land as national forests and grazing districts. Among the aims listed are maximum income to farm and ranch communities, distribution of uses, integration with the institutional framework of the communities, and cooperative management.*



THIS ARTICLE seeks to develop a point of view about ways and means for a well-rounded area study that can serve as a background for administering a body of western "wild" land, such as a national forest or a grazing district.

For brevity, let us use the illustration of a national forest that is valuable for summer grazing and that has a high degree of use association with adjacent privately owned spring and fall grazing lands and cultivated feeds. Such a situation prevails on many western national forests.

This kind of national forest will be somewhat heterogenous as an "area," in that generally there are communities of different size and characteristics on the irrigable lands below the watersheds. These communities generally constitute a resource unit in that they each have a fairly well-defined physiographic division of the "wild" land. There may, however, be questions of choice in the use of the same public land resource by different com-

munities, and this is the reason for considering the entire forest as an area.

The area study must recognize at the outset that national forest administration for some time has been working toward certain policy objectives. The first purpose of the study should be to measure the degree of accomplishment of these objectives. Other aims should be to appraise the policies themselves, in their relation to the resource situation, the economy, and the institutional background of the area, and to bring out the changes needed to make the desired administrative policies effective, and to develop the programs and procedures which will facilitate these changes.

Probably the most important of the policy objectives for which the study should undertake to measure degree of accomplishment is that of making the resource contribute, within the limits of resource maintenance, the maximum possible income to the farm and ranch communities. This is a production-economics concept that has essentially



two phases, the economics of resource interdependency for determining the efficient use associations of different types of land, and the economics of enterprise for determining efficient sizes and types of farm and ranch operating units for range livestock production. These two phases may not be complementary.

A second policy objective is to distribute the use of the resource as widely as appears to be consistent with good resource management and the economic stability of the established ranch owners using the range.

A third is to integrate the use of the resource with the institutional framework of the communities. The distribution of the use of the resource and the prices charged for its use may have a considerable influence upon private land ownership, taxation, and capitalization, upon community settlement patterns and resulting public utility costs, and upon local governmental organization.

A fourth objective is the participation by groups of forest users in the working out of a management plan for the resource, and in the cooperative management of the resource.

A fifth objective—one that will become more important in the future—is the relation of the use of the public land resource to regional and national policies concerning commodity production supplies and supply costs, resource conservation, and choice among the different single or multiple alternatives of resource use.

For the fulfillment of the three primary purposes of the study, several kinds of information are

needed. The general economic and institutional picture of the area should be developed. This will require "in place" mapping, and accompanying statistical summations, of the location of homes, schools, roads, community centers, land ownership and tax status, size, type, and income yield of all farm and ranch operating units, and other similar material. This information shows the community organization and type of agriculture of the area, and is primarily in the nature of a background for the study.

Some type of resource inventory is essential, and should show, by localities, the grazing capacity of the different ranges, the carrying capacity of the cultivated feeds, and the acreage and yield of cash crops. Seasonal use and class of livestock for which the ranges available are best suited should also be shown as well as other features connected with the usability of the range.

The present use of resources should be shown—the numbers and class of livestock and season of use of the different seasonal ranges, livestock trail movements, and the use of cultivated feeds for livestock maintenance.

### *Comparison and Analysis of Material*

Information regarding the present distribution of use of the forest range should show by communities the extent of the use of the summer range by the holders of the other complementary seasonal ranges (that is, stock ranges), and the distribution of summer range to different size classes of livestock operations, such as small, medium, and



---

---

*The agricultural population produces the bravest men, the most valiant soldiers and a class of citizens the least given of all to evil designs.*

—CATO

---

---

large farm livestock enterprises; and small, medium, and large stock ranches.

There is need for a well-selected sample of farm and ranch organization and operating data (including farms that do not operate a livestock enterprise, and including ranch operations and farm livestock enterprises that do not use the public lands).

Certain of the information relating to the institutional factors should be localized to the different communities, particularly the data concerning tax loads and public service costs, land tenure, and land capitalization.

Let us consider briefly some of the methods of comparison and analysis of this material.

The resource inventories and the present use data, for example, may point to lack of balance between seasonal range and feed capacities, and between these capacities and their present intensity of use and season of use, and may indicate the alternatives for economic change.

A study of the sample data showing the organization of the different types of farm and ranch operation also may point to certain changes in the distribution of the use of summer range among these different types. The choice in this case may

be between the ranch operations that make efficient use of the complementary seasonal ranges, and the farm livestock enterprises that improve the organization of the diversified farms.

On the other hand, the small livestock permits may not involve a question of working out the comparative operating efficiencies of different types of commercial livestock production, but rather a matter of adding some income to the subsistence or quasi-subsistence units. A study of this type of operation may show other and more effective ways of getting this supplemental income.

A comparison of the institutional picture of the area with the present areal distribution of the public land grazing privileges may indicate instances where isolated settlement may eventually be reduced, land costs and capitalization equalized, and public service costs lessened.

The community picture of resources and of farm and ranch organization may point the way for more effective local cooperation in planning for and carrying out the management of the resource.

There are certain other aspects of the area study which have not been developed in this brief presentation. One of these is that a national forest or a grazing district which has high values for grazing may also have high values for other uses which may compete in some degree with grazing, and these other uses, such as water production, wildlife, or recreation, may not be closely associated with the income of the local communities. In this situation, the combination of uses which will result in highest values cannot be determined entirely by local income considerations.

# Rural Land Holdings IN SOUTH CAROLINA

By G. H. AULL. *We pay a great deal of attention to problems of agricultural adjustment, soil conservation, rural rehabilitation, farm credit, and, in general, to the whole field of land use planning. The solution of these problems must consider all groups, but the immediate approach to them is necessarily through the present owners. Certainly, under a system of private property in land, the owners' rights, although by no means absolute, are exclusive.*



The ownership, size, and value of separate land holdings are significant factors to be reckoned with in the initiation and development of land use programs. Unfortunately, however, very little information of this kind is available, even in United States Census reports.

For example, the number of farms in South Carolina on January 1, 1935, was reported by the census to be 165,504.

According to the census, however, a "farm" includes "all that land which is directly farmed by one person, either by his own labor alone or with the assistance of members of his household or hired employees. The land operated by a partnership is likewise considered a farm \* \* \* when a landlord has one or more tenants, renters, croppers, or managers the land operated by each is considered a farm. Thus on a plantation the land operated by each cropper or

tenant was reported as a separate farm."

This definition provides no answer to questions about the ownership of these "farms" or the size and estimated value of the separate land holdings. For example, the 1935 census enumerated 51,327 "full-owners" and 10,615 "part-owners" but it did not reveal the ownership of approximately 100,000 "farms" operated by tenants, about one-half of whom were croppers.

This information, nevertheless, is important for purposes of land use planning and agricultural adjustment.

It is interesting to note that 62.2 percent of the "farmers" in South Carolina who were tenants in 1935 operated only 47.8 percent of the land in farms (and 44.9 percent of the values inherent in farm real estate) but harvested 56.0 percent of the crop land. Owners, on the other hand, with 37.4 percent of the farms, operated 47.6 percent of the land in farms (and controlled

50.6 percent of the farm real estate value) but harvested only 41.9 percent of the crop land.

The average "cropper" farm contained less than 43 acres and had an estimated total value (land, buildings, and improvements) of only about \$1,000. Full-owner farms, on the other hand, were almost 100 acres in size and had an estimated value which averaged nearly two and one-half times that reported for cropper farms.

A study was undertaken by the South Carolina Experiment Station (in cooperation with the Work Progress Administration as project No. 3687) to determine the facts about the ownership of rural land holdings in South Carolina as to type of owner, size of separate holdings, and assessed value distribution. The data, analyzed by counties and by type-of-farming areas, are suggestive of problems which will be encountered and conditions which must be faced in the different sections of the State if a sound land policy is to be put into effect.

### *How Data Were Obtained*

Data were obtained direct from the tax rolls in each of 43 of the 46 counties of the State. Properties within the limits of incorporated places were not considered. As a source of data the tax books were used rather than any "register of deeds" because of the fact that they afforded a more complete and convenient record.

Not all of the properties included in the study are in any sense farms. Areas of less than 3 acres were excluded, however, which had the effect of eliminating many nonfarm

rural enterprises. In addition, a conscious effort was made to omit from consideration properties which obviously were industrial in nature.

It is unfortunate that there is nowhere available an adequate, current index of the total land resources of the State according to any acceptable classification. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration records are perhaps the most complete with respect to land in farms, but do not cover extended areas in forests.

The periodic returns of real estate for taxation easily could be made to serve this purpose. Certainly a reasonably complete classification of land is essential to a sound land policy and would be of particular value at the present stage of development. The usual tax return, however, shows merely the total number of acres and their value without regard to use, productivity, or other characteristic. No distinction is made between farm land and forest land or between crop land and woodland or pasture. In many cases, even, it is optional with the taxpayer whether a distinction is made between "acres" and "lots."

### *Types of Ownership*

In the 43 counties, 141,355 rural properties were listed and classified, first, by type of owner. Of this number 135,541, or 95.9 percent, were reported to have been held by individuals. Banks, insurance companies, other corporations and partnerships claimed title (on the tax books, at least) to fewer than 6,000, or only about 4 percent of all rural properties in the State. Owners other than individuals, however, ac-

counted for 12.3 percent of the total acreage and 11.3 percent of the total assessed value of all rural properties listed.

The percentage of properties reported in the names of individuals varied by type-of-farming areas from 94.6 to 97.9. In one area, however, individuals accounted for only about two-thirds of the acreage (and two-thirds of the assessed value) and in only three areas did individual ownership embrace more than 90 percent of the acreage. These figures are exclusive of land held by governmental agencies.

Corporate ownership was negligible in a few counties but in others amounted to one-half of the acreage and nearly one-half of the assessed value of all rural estate. Since corporate holdings are larger than average, the number of properties involved is proportionately much less than these figures of acreage and value would indicate, and range from 1 percent in some counties to 23 percent in others.

## Ownership by Corporations

Corporations (including banks, insurance companies, lumber companies, and so on) seem to have acquired substantial acreages in Jasper, McCormick, Clarendon, and Harry Counties, although the number of such holdings is relatively small. In Jasper County, for example, fewer than 4 percent of all rural properties are listed under corporate ownership, but they embrace nearly 60 percent of the rural lands in the county and 58 percent of the rural assessed values.

To put it differently, the average individually owned rural property in Jasper County is 88 acres and is assessed for \$419, or \$4.76 an acre. The average of all other holdings, however, is 3,418 acres with an assessed value of \$14,968 per holding and \$4.38 an acre. In the State as a whole the differences were less marked:

Type of owner	Average size (acres)	Averaged assessed value	
		Per property	Per acre
Individuals.....	102.0	\$573	\$5.62
Banks.....	153.0	721	4.71
Insurance Companies.....	258.9	1,471	5.68
All others.....	456.9	2,327	5.09
All types.....	111.5	619	5.55

Of the 141,355 properties listed, more than one-fourth were less than 25 acres in size and nearly one-half contained fewer than 50 acres. Only 4,009, or 2.84 percent, measured as

much as 500 acres. These latter properties, however, accounted for 28.37 percent of the acreage and 20.43 percent of the assessed value of all properties, while those in the

first two groups contained only 8.78 percent of the total acreage and 15.05 percent of the total assessed value.

Here is shown the distribution of properties by size, and, for each group, the percentage of total properties, acreage, and assessed value:

Acres per property	Percent of total		
	Properties	Acres	Assessed value
Less than 25 . . . . .	25. 87	2. 69	6. 58
25-49.99 . . . . .	19. 01	6. 09	8. 47
50-99.99 . . . . .	23. 91	14. 89	17. 43
100-199.99 . . . . .	18. 73	22. 72	23. 36
200-499.99 . . . . .	9. 64	25. 24	23. 73
500 and above . . . . .	2. 84	28. 37	20. 43

Considerable variation is observed in the distribution of the different sizes of holdings among the various types of owners. For example, less than 3 percent of the properties held by insurance companies were smaller than 25 acres, representing a negligible amount of acreage and of assessed value. One-eighth of the insurance company properties, however, were in tracts of 500 acres or more and accounted for more than two-fifths of the acreage and nearly one-third of the assessed value of all such properties. More than three-fourths of the acreage classified under miscellaneous holdings was concentrated in tracts of 500 acres or more.

### *Assessments*

In the State as a whole, and for all types of ownership, it appears that somewhat more than one-half of the rural acreage and nearly half of the rural real estate value in South Carolina is concentrated in the hands of approximately one-eighth of the rural owners in tracts

of 200 acres or more. At the other end of the scale, one-fourth of the owners control less than 3 percent of the acreage and about 6 percent of the value. Whether this represents an undesirable situation (and in what direction) is not now a question. It does, however, suggest some of the problems to be encountered in any attempt to work out desirable land use adjustments.

When viewed by counties, it is found that small holdings are predominant in the coastal plain area (especially along the Atlantic Ocean), and to a less extent in the highly urbanized counties of Richland, Greenville, and Spartanburg. The larger holdings, on the other hand, are evident in scattered counties throughout the State.

The abnormally high assessments of the properties containing fewer than 2 acres (average 11.1) are doubtless due in large measure to the relative importance of buildings on such properties, but may be explained in part by the relatively large number of such properties on the outskirts of cities and towns.

Compared with an assessment of 13.43 an acre on these properties, the assessment on properties of 500 acres or more is only \$4 and on all properties \$5.55.

### *Taxes on 30 Percent of Value*

The acre assessment on properties of 500 acres or more is significant. Undoubtedly much of the timber in South Carolina is held in tracts that fall within this group and the low average rate of assessment is indicative of the fact that, while no provision is made in the statutes for a classification of property for tax purposes, timber appears to enjoy a favorable position in this respect.

Research indicates that, on the average, rural real estate is assessed for taxes at approximately 25 to 30 percent of its actual value. An assessment of nearly \$90,000,000 on the rural properties listed in the 43 counties covered by this study, therefore, suggests actual rural wealth (real estate only, exclusive of strictly industrial properties) amounting to about \$350,000,000. Although numerous inequalities are known to exist as between one property and another, the distribution of rural properties in South Carolina, as revealed by this study, may be taken as approximating the distribution of wealth among the owners of rural real estate (not including holdings of 3 acres or less and not including industrial properties).

An analysis of the listings reveals the fact that nearly 55,000, or about 40 percent, of the properties appeared on the tax books at an assessed value less than \$250. These properties accounted for only 9.30 percent of the total acreage and 7.83

---

---

*The well-being of a people is like a tree, agriculture is its root, manufacturing and commerce are its branches and its life; if the roots are injured the leaves fall, the branches break away, and the tree dies.*

—A CHINESE PHILOSOPHER

---

---

percent of the total assessed value. On the other hand, 51.30 percent of the acreage and 54.36 percent of the assessed value was contained in only 14.70 percent of the properties which were assessed for \$1,000 or more.

These figures are interesting from the standpoint of their relation to the property-tax situation in South Carolina. For example, the average rural tax rate for State, county, and school purposes is, perhaps, not more than 40 mills, which (under current assessment practices) is equivalent to less than 1 cent on each dollar of actual value. This means that taxes levied on nearly one-half of the real properties in South Carolina amount to less than \$10 per property and in two-thirds of the cases the amount is less than \$20 per property.

As is to be expected, individuals hold relatively fewer properties of large assessed value (and presumably large actual value) than other types of owners. Only about one-seventh of the individually owned properties were on the tax books for as much as \$1,000, as compared with about one-fifth in the case of banks, one-half in the case of insur-

ance companies, and one-third in the case of all others. At the same time proportionately a much higher percentage of properties held by individuals were in the lowest assessed value group (less than \$250).

From the standpoint of acreage, the figures are even more striking. Less than half of the acreage held by individuals was in tracts assessed for \$1,000 or more while three-fourths of the acreage of insurance companies and six-sevenths of the

acreage reported by "all others" was so held.

The average assessed value of all properties, as has been said, was \$619 per property and \$5.55 per acre. It appears that properties having a low assessed value were not only small in size but assessed at a low per-acre figure. With each increase in assessed value per property there was an increase in both average size and average assessed value per acre.

---

## *Here Still—*

**H**ERE STILL on quiet afternoons we know  
The hard-won gift of peace. Across our land,  
Gaily the silver-ribboned highways go  
Seeking each town, each farm to link with strand  
Of farther sunlit seas. From our high hills  
Sweetly the lovely winds of Heaven blow,  
Soothing the valley homes. For all our ills,  
From our own soil the streams of healing flow.

HERE STILL is peace—here where the James hastens  
Past ruined church at Jamestown to the sea,  
Where Valley Forge, green in the sun, chastens  
Thoughts of our beginnings. It cannot be  
That on this soil made free, that on this land,  
Shadows of alien force will ever stand.

—ESTHER MARIE COLVIN

# Solving a Problem

## BEFORE IT STARTS

*By B. M. GILE. Notable progress has been made in classifying nonurban lands so that they contribute most to the general welfare and to the labor and capital applied to them. But it is only the beginning. Needed also are greater attention to the preparation of information about land classification and use in a form suitable for future utilization, and action to prevent waste of resources in connection with privately owned lands and lands coming under State control.*



To improve the real income of farmers in the lower quarter of the income scale and assure greater security and stability of tenure for all farmers, land classification must be made available to present and prospective users and to the general public.

This involves mapping, for which many State institutions are at present inadequately equipped. It is largely a question of organization and budgets, and therefore administrators must be convinced of the need. Official reports of desirable or undesirable use problems connected with specific lands available to a prospective tenant or purchaser are uncommon. The solution of land problems in specified areas frequently depends upon the adoption of regulations and controls by the ballot, and this constitutes a practical reason why the general public needs to be supplied with land-use information.

The principle that land is vested

with public interest is now widely accepted and its application to lands coming into possession of the State should meet with little resistance, since property rights are vested in the State and most of the land is not occupied. The fact that the laws of many States do not provide for a use classification of State lands before sale indicates either that the majority of the people's chosen representatives do not understand that land has undesirable as well as desirable capabilities, or that the legislators believe there would be more resistance than support among the electorate for such an undertaking.

In most States, the methods of administration and the laws under which State land departments operate are still those that were developed during pioneer days, when the idea prevailed that the public interest would be served best by transferring all lands into private ownership as rapidly as possible.

With few exceptions, States dispose of their lands for farming



without regard to the quality of the land or the extent of land required for a family-sized farm. The price is determined by the law, usually on the basis of the accumulated taxes and legal penalties, and this price frequently has no reasonable relation to the probable annual income from the products the land will produce. The present procedure often results in scattered settlement, an unjustified increase in public costs for roads and schools, waste of natural resources, poverty, and increased relief costs.

### *To Avoid Private Exploitation*

Private exploitation is still possible. If one can find a tract which the State has owned long enough for it to produce a valuable crop of timber, he may, under the law in many States, buy the land at a price that has no relation to the immediate market value of the timber crop. After removing the crop, which has taken years to produce, the barren land frequently is permitted to revert again to the State for nonpayment of taxes. Taxation methods with respect to land suitable for growing timber are frequently such as to discourage the practice of sustained yield and annual income cuttings. This encourages a destructive harvest. The result too often is a waste of both human and land resources.

It is encouraging to know that some progress is being made in the administration of State lands. In 1939, the State Legislature of Arkansas adopted a State land policy and provided for a statesmanlike procedure in the administration and disposition of State-owned lands in Act No. 331, which became effective

June 9. The State land commissioner is given new powers and responsibilities. He is empowered to have lands surveyed in case of doubtful location or faulty descriptions; to bring action to quiet title; to have lands classified as to whether they should be retained in public ownership, allocated for agricultural settlement or returned to private settlement through sale or donation. Under the old law homesteads were limited to 160 acres. Under the new law it is recognized that a small acreage of very productive land that is all tillable may support a family, whereas a section or more might be the unit required where livestock grazing and perpetual forestry would be the main sources of income.

Other important provisions of the law are: That deeds to land disposed of may be something less than a fee simple title to the extent necessary to protect the public welfare; that the land commissioner may prevent isolated settlement and encourage group settlement; and that the State may sell small tracts of land to adjoining owners provided the enlarged ownership is not more than a family-sized farm.

The Federal Government belatedly set a good example in the administration of public lands in the Taylor Act of 1934, which closed the Public Domain to further homesteading, pending classification as to best uses. This public act reversed a national policy followed for 150 years and gave public recognition to the fact that little good farm land now remains in the public domain, and that further homesteading should not be permitted except on tracts classified as suitable for homesteading.

## *Privately Owned Lands Not In Farms*

Rural lands privately owned but not now in farms comprise a rather impressive area in many States. In Arkansas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, North and South Carolina, and Florida, 47 percent of the total area is not in farms and much of this is rural land in private ownership. In Louisiana, about 60 percent of the area is not now in farms, and in one parish where 88 percent of the land is not in farms, a study showed that 71 percent of this land is owned by 18 corporations, whose central offices were outside the State.

As privately owned rural lands not in farms are potential farm and home sites, it seems reasonable to propose that their proper use be insured within reasonable limits through control and directional measures. The public has shown its willingness to tax itself to help farmers improve their economic condition, and it would seem a prudent public policy to prevent the establishment of additional farms under conditions that would indicate probable failure if they are under average management.

Zoning is one of the social tools useful in preventing the development of undesirable results. Many States need permissive legislation to give added legal status to county zoning ordinances dealing with the use of land in strictly rural areas. A better understanding of the place and objective of rural zoning may be necessary before permissive laws can be obtained, and it is also essential for the proper administration of zoning ordinances, if and when

they may be enacted. Interest will be most easily developed around local situations where the value of zoning can be readily understood, and zoning ordinances will be passed with the least resistance in areas containing considerable land not in farms.

## *To Prevent Ill-Advised Farm Purchases*

One of the important things that ought to be done in connection with land not now in farms is to prevent the ill-advised purchase of land for agricultural enterprises. Restricting the use of such areas through zoning would accomplish this end, but—judging from the period of years required to accomplish zoning in Wisconsin after education leading to this end first began—it may be several years before this useful social tool for better land use is in widespread operation. In California, real-estate license laws have been helpful, and should receive consideration. The laws there require that prospective purchasers be furnished with written information on the suitability of the land for the uses to which it is advertised as being adapted.

In order that the enforcement of real-estate license laws in any State may protect its citizens from ill-advised purchases of farm land in other States, it is desirable that the citizens be able to obtain from officials in these other States reliable information regarding the land offered for sale. For this purpose, a use-capability classification of specific lands, made by unbiased agencies, is needed. In some sections that contain land suitable for farm enterprises, it is a common

practice for the land to be sold in tracts that are too small to provide a reasonable income. Therefore the classification should be supplemented by advice as to the size of tract needed, or information that the prospective purchaser may use as a basis for arriving at an intelligent conclusion. Price classification for the use recommended should also be included.

Even without zoning or license laws, a knowledge of land-use capabilities by local persons and some official stamp of approval or disapproval of a specific area for settlement can do a great deal to give direction to land settlement. The work on land classification being done through county agricultural land-use planning committees may be expected to be valuable in reducing new settlement in undesirable places or on uneconomically sized

units, if their conclusions with respect to land classes are made available to the public.

In an area where public education with respect to land use and the relation of human institutions affecting land use is relatively new, there are two special reasons why we should not neglect to obtain as quickly as practicable a good land policy with respect to State lands and private lands not in farms. The first is that the development of these lands in their proper uses would make a real contribution by precept and example to progress in solving the problems connected with land now in farms. The second is that the use of these lands for those things which promise to contribute to the private and social well-being of the people should furnish added sources of income to the farm population.



## Books

MEN ON THE MOVE. *Nels Anderson*. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago. 357 pages.

by WILLIAM T. HAM

FOR WRITING on the migrants of today, Mr. Anderson has one prime qualification: He is an expert on the migrants of yesterday.

In 1923 he wrote a book called "The Hobo," a venture into what the author then regarded as sociological journalism, but which turned out to be history. For no sooner was the book off the press than its

subject, the hobo, began to disappear from the highways of America. He became one with "the pre-Hollywood cowboy and the lumberjacks of the Paul Bunyan legends." In writing of those men of the road, as Mr. Anderson now confesses, he overlooked the technological changes which not only took away hobos' jobs but soon filled the roads with

their successors, the migrants of today, the subject of this latest work.

The modern migrant is unlike his counterpart of the early twenties. The hobo, whatever his vices, was usually a self-sustaining man, deterred from settling down chiefly by his "itching feet." He was an individualist, a world citizen, with a mild scorn for the "home guard" of the towns, and the tied-down farmers, the "scissor bills." For the tramp and the bum he had a vast contempt: "A hobo will work, a tramp won't, and a bum couldn't if he wanted to." He was frequently a proud and sometimes an arrogant fellow, displaying a spirit very different from the frustration and apathy which so often characterizes the wanderer of today. The hobo was the "last of the ballad makers," a singer of struggle, not of despair, as the I. W. W. Song Book bears witness. It is apparent that he appealed to Mr. Anderson in a way the modern migrant does not. Hence the color of the first two chapters of "Men on the Move," which are a sort of salute to the "bindle-stiff," old style, in contrast to the rest of the book about the "rubber-tramp," the new style migrant on tires. For the Oakies and Arkies, migrancy is not a life program. They travel, often with their families, in the hope of ceasing to travel.

"Men on the Move," as the author points out in his introduction, contains nothing that is new. It is a presentation of material drawn mainly from the publications in the National Research Project Series of the WPA, those of the Division of Social Research of the same agency, and other FERA and WPA surveys of transient workers. Mr. Ander-

son has been for some years director of the Labor Relations Section of WPA.

THE BOOK is divided into three parts. In Part I the old and the new forms of the problem of migrancy are contrasted there are chapters on the unattached migrant and the migrant family. Part II deals with the causes of migrancy, namely, exhaustion of natural resources, change of industry, and agricultural change. In the account of exploited timber resources, stranded coal towns in Oklahoma and Illinois, and silent textile mills at Amoskeag and Manchester, the student of rural affairs may find much that is suggestive. In the chapter on change in agriculture he will find little.

Part III takes up the question of what is to be done about the migrant. On the whole this section is curiously inconclusive, perhaps inevitably so. For in his introduction Mr. Anderson disclaims any intention of presenting a solution of the problem. Men on the move do not worry him, so long as they move to some purpose. Migrancy, in his view, is a normal means of balancing opportunity between areas. Absence of such movement might produce greater social strains than now arise from current efforts at relocation. Provide jobs for the unemployed of the nation, of whom the migrants are merely a mobile section, and migrancy will lose its pathological characteristics. The volume of movement is not likely soon to diminish. Meanwhile, do not try to push the migrants back on the land and do not leave them to the mercies of the present ill-organized casual-labor market.

WHATEVER MAY BE DONE to control and direct migration will have to be carried out, Mr. Anderson believes, under the leadership of the Federal Government. State programs are too limited, and local measures are designed rather to protect the residents than to help the migrants, for most of whom the WPA has been of little benefit. What is needed is an effective, Nation-wide placement service, provid-

ing Federal guidance for the movement of the essential seasonal labor supply, combined with a program of public employment. Relief must be administered so as to terminate migrancy, not perpetuate it. "In the long run it is more economical to give public work than public relief." And although Mr. Anderson offers no detailed program, he believes that "there is plenty of public work that needs to be done."

---

## {✓ *For your attention*

**BALLOT BEHAVIOR; A STUDY OF PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.** Louis H. Bean. Introduction by Charles E. Merriam. 102 pages. Washington, D. C. American Council on Public Affairs. 1940.

This study of presidential elections "deals with some of the results of a hobby started by an accidental adventure into political statistics in 1936." Since 1936 the author has roamed as a spare-time activity, statistically, over the country examining political records of States, counties, and cities.

Some of the findings here recorded are: "A new and useful meaning to the old adage 'as Maine goes so goes the Nation'; the discovery of a large number of States that go as the Nation goes; a compact portrayal of 40 years of presidential history for each of the 48 States; a simple method of measuring political tides; the effect of business conditions on the course of these tides; and a schedule of relationship between the national popular vote and the State electoral votes . . ."

In his introduction, Dr. Merriam says in part:

"The present volume . . . is an important venture in the analysis of voting trends,

and is worthy of the attention of all students of American political behavior. Without agreeing to all of Mr. Bean's methods and results, on some of which I have reservations, I commend his study to the careful consideration of specialists concerned with the more intimate and precise analysis of political phenomena. It will also be helpful to the great body of our citizens who wish a better background for examining the large number of analyses and forecasts of political observers now appearing and likely to appear in greater numbers in the immediate future. Reading this work of Mr. Bean will not automatically make a man a forecaster, but it will give him a far better background for checking up on the ways and means of the political soothsayers, whether proceeding on the basis of hunches or of technical analysis, whether driven along by wishful thinking or by scientific objectivity."

**A SOMEWHERE ELSE.** 13 pages. Oklahoma. Division of Water Resources. 1940.

This is a discussion of the Oklahoma migrant who is a victim of economic upheaval and of a proposed plan for his rehabilitation as an "antidote for 'forced wander-

lust.' The intensive orderly culture of soil, and the conservation of moisture are recommended. Intensive, diversified subsistence farming under small acreage individual allotment would be stressed under this plan. These subsistence units would be filtered throughout flood plains and adjacent areas. It is believed that with the development of soil and water resources, industrial enterprise would necessarily increase and that coordinated planning would undoubtedly group these "livelihood farms" and new industries to mutual advantage in market-labor relations.

**AGRICULTURAL LABOR RESEARCH.** Proceedings of the Conference on Research Relating to Labor in Agriculture. Berkely, California. William S. Hopkins, Stanford University, Social Science Research Council, Pacific Coast Regional Committee, Subcommittee on Labor in Agriculture, 1940.

This conference, which was designed to afford an over-all view of the farm labor situation before regional studies were undertaken in the Pacific Coast States, discussed research needs in the field of agricultural labor under these headings: Types of Agricultural Labor; Changes in Farm Structure Which Affect Agricultural Labor, Migration of Agricultural Labor; The Law With Respect to Agricultural Labor; Welfare and Farm Labor; and the Formulation of Research Programs. A list of those attending the conference is included.

**MARYLAND FARM HANDBOOK, 1940.** State and Federal Agricultural Services. United States Department of Agriculture. 59 pages. Washington, United States Government Printing Office.

The agricultural services listed in this farm handbook include agricultural services of the State of Maryland and the United States Government which are directly available to farmers. Topics on which information and aid may be obtained include: Agricultural Conservation Program; Agricultural Education; Crop and Livestock Estimates; Crop Insurance; Debt Adjustment; Farm Accounts, Farm Crops; Land Use Planning; Marketing; Rural Electrification; Soils; etc.

**FAMILY INCOME AND EXPENDITURES.** Middle Atlantic and North Central Region and New England Region. Family Income. Day Monroe, Elizabeth Phelps, and Idella G. Swisher. U. S. Dept. Agr. Misc. Pub. 370, 447 pp. Washington, 1940. (Consumer Purchases Study. Urban and Village Series.)

This report is one of a series covering income and expenditures of small-city and village families. Others of the series which have been issued to date are Miscellaneous Publication 339 of the United States Department of Agriculture, family income of the Pacific Region, and Miscellaneous Publication 345, covering such income in the Plains and Mountain Region. A similar series deals with income and expenditures of farm families. Of this series only one, Miscellaneous Publication 356, covering family income of the Pacific and Plains and Mountain Regions, has appeared. Further reports of both series are now in press or in process of completion. Part 2 of each series will be issued in the form of a summary of family expenditures covering five regions.

A number of reports covering family income and expenditures in urban regions have been issued by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor, in its Bulletin series. These, together with the reports mentioned above, constitute the Study of Consumer Purchases.

These studies were conducted by the Bureau of Home Economics of the United States Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor, with the cooperation of the National Resources Committee, the Works Progress Administration, and the Central Statistical Board.

Such studies as had previously been made of family expenditures in this country covered only small samples of families or were restricted to certain groups of the population. This completed Consumer Purchases Study will therefore fill a long-felt need for information in this field.

In compiling the reports, the sample was limited to native-born, white, unbroken families, except in the Southeast and in New York City and Columbus, Ohio, where a special study of Negro families was

made. Families studied included only a portion of the population but the collection of schedules was so planned as to give a random sample of the families meeting the requirements for inclusion.

The farm sections studied were chosen on the basis of a type of agriculture predominant or widely prevalent. When the project is completed, 14 types of farming will have been so examined.

---

## In Magazines

ACCORDING TO an article by Neil M. Clark (*Soil Saving Goes Local* in COUNTRY GENTLEMAN for November), the work of the Soil Conservation Service has literally been taken over by the farmers themselves. Thirty-eight States have now adopted legislation which enables the Secretary of Agriculture to authorize the spending of Federal erosion-control funds in them.

Generally, this legislation provides for the appointment of State soil-conservation committees; the setting up of soil-conservation districts by groups of 25 farmers; local elections to determine whether a majority of the landowners want such districts; and the machinery for self-government within the districts, and for obtaining assistance from Federal, State, and other governmental agencies. In addition, some of the State laws have clauses which enable farmers in a district to regulate and restrict land uses that they find to be against the public interest.

This is the groundwork for scientific, long-range land use planning by the farmers and the SCS. Mr. Clark says it answers the question: "Why not leave leadership and control in local hands, but fix it so that Washington, or any other agency, could furnish technical guidance when needed—material, labor, and equip-

ment, too, if these happened to be available?"

"THE DISPOSSESSED are walking the roads of America—refugees not of war, but of a revolution that is turning agriculture into an industry . . ." is the theme of Hazel Hendricks' Farmers Without Farms in the October ATLANTIC MONTHLY. The total now numbers half a million. Forty thousand are expected to join each year. Soil depletion, low farm prices, loss of export markets, unsound tenure system, surplus farm population are described as causes. Mechanization of American farms is termed an outstanding contributing factor.

For meeting the problem, Miss Hendricks recommends, in addition to an expanded Farm Security Program to administer to the needs of seasonal farm laborers, and extension of social-security, wage-hour, and labor-relations laws for all agricultural workers, vigorous action along 4 broad lines: Development of good new land for the future; strengthening of the tenure system; termination of the present exploitation of the farm laboring population, and acknowledgment that most of our disadvantaged rural people must look outside of agriculture for a livelihood.



---

---

*Our thoughts may ordinarily be concentrated upon the cities and the hives of industry, upon the cries of the crowded market place and the clangor of the factory, but it is from the quiet interspaces of the open valleys and the free hillsides that we draw the sources of life and of prosperity, from the farm and the ranch, from the forest and the mine. Without these every street would be silent, every office deserted, every factory fallen into disrepair. And yet the farmer does not stand upon the same footing with the forester and the miner in the market of credit. He is the servant of the seasons. Nature determines how long he must wait for his crops, and will not be hurried in her processes. He may give his note, but the season of its maturity depends upon the season when his crop matures . . . And the security he gives is of a character not known in the broker's office or as familiarly as it might be on the counter of the banker.*

—WOODROW WILSON

---

---



—  
ad  
ce  
es  
es  
he  
nt,  
et  
er  
he  
ps,  
te,  
his  
ter  
be

—  
DN  
—